



How to create Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) documents

Creating Adobe Acrobat documents requires a copy of Adobe Acrobat. You may or may not have Adobe Acrobat installed on your computer. Being able to *read* Acrobat documents may mean that you have just the free Acrobat Reader installed, instead of the full Acrobat. (Things would be semantically simpler if Adobe had called the full version of this product *Acrobat Writer*.) The instructions below will step you through creating an Acrobat document, and help you determine if you need to get a copy of Acrobat.

Short version: Select the Acrobat printer and print your document there.

1. Open the document you wish to convert to Adobe Acrobat format with whatever application you would normally use to work on that document. *E.g.* for a Microsoft Word document, open it with Microsoft Word.
2. Pull down the File menu and select “Print” (or whatever else you do to print in your application).
3. You should see a dialog box that allows you to, among other things, select the printer you want to use. You need to select the Adobe Acrobat printer. Its exact name will vary depending on what version of Acrobat you have, and there may be more than one Acrobat printer listed. The example shown below is for Microsoft Word with Acrobat version 5; the Acrobat printers are called “Acrobat Distiller” and “Acrobat PDFWriter”. If you have Acrobat 6 instead, there will be one printer called “Adobe PDF”.

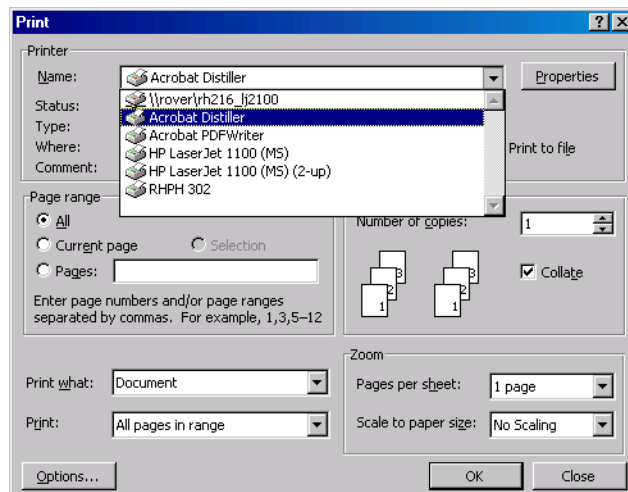


Figure 1 - Example printer-selection screen

If you do not see an Acrobat printer, then you need to obtain a copy of Acrobat. Contact your technical support personnel for assistance. Acrobat, unlike Acrobat Reader, is not free.

4. If you **DO** see an acrobat printer, then select it and print the document. If you have a modern version of Acrobat, another box will pop up asking you where you want to save the new .pdf file. Save it somewhere logical on your computer, then upload it to the web.

If you have a really old version of Acrobat, nothing will appear to happen when you print to the Acrobat printer. Older versions of Acrobat always put their output in the same place, and didn't allow you to rename files, so the .pdf is on your hard drive... somewhere. Contact your technical support, and ask them to help you find where the files are being stored... and have them get you a more recent version of Acrobat, too.

The several Acrobat printers have a LOT of options available when you click on the ‘Properties’ button. Most of these affect the file size and display quality of the Acrobat file produced. The default settings tend to make very high-quality (and very large) files. This is especially true if your files contain graphics. If the .pdf files you create are very large, click on ‘Properties’, select the ‘Adobe PDF settings’ tab, and pull down the ‘Conversion Settings’ list (in Acrobat 5; your screens may vary). ‘ebook’, the default setting, is very-high-quality graphics; the next several settings will reduce graphics quality and file size. Make several copies of your document and view and/or print them to paper. This will help you determine which settings are best for what you are doing.

Special recommendations for PowerPoint files:

There are a couple of additional settings you should select to get the best results from Microsoft PowerPoint files.

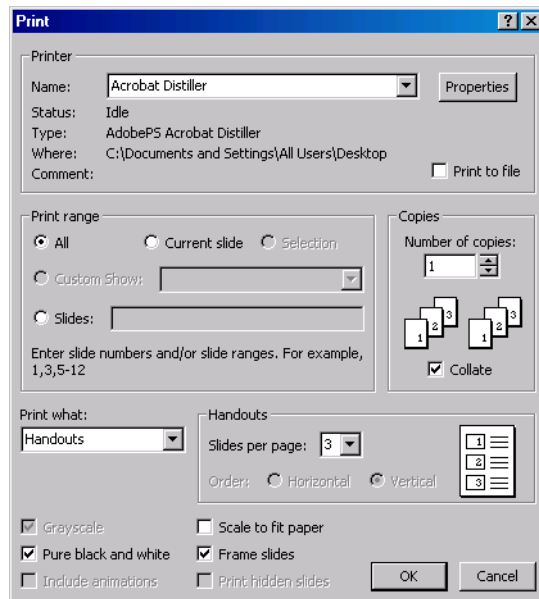


Figure 2 - Recommended settings for PowerPoint files

For PowerPoint files, it is recommended that you check off the “Pure black and white” box in the lower left corner. This will drop out any backgrounds used in the slides, and convert all of the text to black. This is very useful if you have used light-colored text on a dark background – it will make the printouts much more legible. In addition, going to black and white will reduce the size of the files produced.

It is also recommended that you pull down the “Print what” list, located on the left edge towards the bottom, and change the selection from “slides” to “handouts”. In the “Handouts” box to the right, change the number of Slides per page from 6 to 3. This will create printouts that are highly suitable for students taking notes. These two tips also apply when printing out presentations. These tips cannot be accessed if you click on the “Create PDF” button that Acrobat sometimes installs in Microsoft Office applications.